

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, GR, TU

SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER REAFFIRMS MODERATION IN GREECE'S

TURKISH POLICY

1. PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS VIGOROUSLY DEFENDED HIS APPROACH TO THE AEGEAN DISPUTE DURING A SEPTEMBER 4 SPEECH AT THE OPENING OF THE ANNUAL THESSALONIKI INTERNATIONAL TRADE FAIR.

WELCOMED BY LARGE AND ENTHUSIASTIC CROWDS, THE PRIME MINISTER DELIVERED A TWO BARRELLED MESSAGE: THAT THE GREEK PEOPLE MUST PULL IN THEIR BELTS IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THE NATION'S TWO MOST IMPORTANT OBJECTIVES: "TO BUTTRESS THE COUNTRY AGAINST FOREIGN ENEMIES AND TO ACHIEVE FULL INTEGRATION INTO THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY".

2. WHILE THE BULK OF THE SPEECH WAS DEVOTED TO THE GOVERNMENT'S ECONOMIC PROGRAM (SEPTEL), ITS CENTERPIECE WAS HIS DEFENSE

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OF HIS TURKISH POLICY AGAINST THOSE CALLING FOR A TOUGHER

LINE. HE SAID, GREEK-TURKISH RELATIONS ARE IN A "SAD, NOT TO SAY DANGEROUS, STATE...NOT SO MUCH BECAUSE TURKEY MAKES CERTAIN CLAIMS -- WHICH UP TO A POINT ARE NEGOTIABLE-- BUT RATHER BECAUSE TURKEY SEEMS TO SATISFY THEM THROUGH FORCE". STATING THAT THE TWO NATIONS NOW SEEM HEADED FOR "A DIALOGUE", AND THAT GREECE WILL PARTICIPATE IN GOOD FAITH, HE ADDED, PESSIMISTICALLY, THAT "THE MOST RECENT BEHAVIOR OF TURKEY DOES NOT JUSTIFY ANY GREAT OPTIMISM ABOUT THE OUTCOME OF THE DIAGOGUE". NEVERTHELESS, HE SAID, "WE MUST GIVE THE DIALOGUE A CHANCE".

3. CARAMANLIS APPEALED TO THE GREEK PEOPLE TO FOLLOW HIS EXAMPLE AND "TO ARM THEMSELVES WITH PATIENCE AND SANGFROID." AND IN REPLY TO THOSE WHO MAY HAVE DOUBTS ABOUT HIS WILLINGNESS TO TAKE MORE FORCEFUL ACTION, HE ASKED THE PEOPLE "TO BELIEVE THAT I AM NO LESS SENSITIVE WHERE THE NATIONAL HONOR IS CONCERNED THAN ANYONE...", PROMISING THAT "ATHE THE CRUCIAL HOUR, WHICH I HOPE WILL NEVER COME, BOTH THE INTERESTS AND THE HONOR OF THE COUNTRY WILL BE FULLY PROTECTED". HE WARNED THAT GREECE MUST ALSO MAKE SACRIFICES AT HOME TO BUILD ITS MILITARY STRENGTH AND THUS "DISCOURAGE CERTAIN CIRCLES IN ANKARA WHICH ARE TRYING TO DRAG THE TURKISH PEOPLE INTO DANGEROUS ADVENTURES".

4. AMONG GREECE'S POLITICAL LEADERSHIP ONLY ANDREAS PAPANDREOU, ON SEPTEMBER 5, OBJECTED TO THE PRIME MINISTER'S PRESENTATION OF HIS TURKISH POLICY. PRONOUNCING HIMSELF "GRIEVED" AT THE PRIME MINISTER'S REMARKS, PAPANDREOU LEVELED HIS STANDARD CRITICISM AT THEM: THAT BY REFERRING TO TURKISH "RIGHTS" IN THE AEGEAN, THE PRIME MINISTER ONLY ENCOURAGES TURKISH EXPANSIONISM. PAPANDREOU, WHO HAS REPEATEDLY STATED THAT THE TURKS MUST BE CONFRONTED AND NOT APPEASED, ADDED "I WONDER IF PERHAPS THE NEW DEMOCRACY PARTY IS QUITE INCAPABLE OF IMPLEMENTING A GREEK FOREIGN POLICY". IN CONTRAST TO PAPANDREOU'S SLASHING ATTACK, AND AS IF IN RESPONSE TO IT, EDA'S ILIAS ILIOU, THE GRAND OLD MAN OF THE GREEK LEFT, ON SEPTEMBER 6, ENDORSED THE PRIME MINISTER'S TURKISH POLICY.

KUBISCH

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